



2021 IN REVIEW

LEVI STRAUSS FOUNDATION

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Partners,

I had the honor of joining the Levi Strauss Foundation as Executive Director in August 2021. I came to this new role after serving as vice president of programs at the California Wellness Foundation, one of California's largest public health philanthropic institutions that aims to advance wellness for the people of California.

I have long admired LS&Co. and the Levi Strauss Foundation, and the values they share—originality, integrity, empathy, courage—are aligned with my own. I am impressed by the legacy of the Foundation, which has a long history of making bold and transformative investments. I also deeply appreciate that the Foundation provides more than just the grant dollars: it leverages the grant with its voice, the company's brand and its people to support pioneering leaders

working on the frontlines of change in communities around the globe.

In 2021, the Foundation granted \$9.5 million to over 100 community partners across our three core program areas of HIV/AIDS, Worker Rights and Well-being and Social Justice. We also continued our COVID-19 relief work, awarding \$2.0 million (\$4.0 million since 2020) to support apparel workers abroad and communities in the U.S. who were most impacted by the pandemic.

Looking Ahead

The year 2022 marks the 70-year anniversary of our founding. We began the year with Levi Strauss & Co. making the largest contribution to the Foundation in over 25 years—\$11 million. With our resources, the Foundation will invest in efforts to advance democracy in the U.S. and increase access to justice. We will continue to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic by investing in strategies that reduce the social inequities driving the epidemic in underserved and high-risk communities in the U.S. and abroad. In partnership with the company, we will continue to drive the Worker Well-being (WWB) initiative, which aims to improve the lives of the women and men who make our products around the world.

These are challenging and serious times for the communities we support, but I am confident that as we look ahead, we will build on the 70-year history of the Levi Strauss Foundation.

In partnership.

Fatima Angeles
Executive Director
Levi Strauss Foundation



BACKGROUND

MISSION & PURPOSE

MISSION STATEMENT

The Levi Strauss Foundation advances the human rights and well-being of underserved people in places where the company has a business presence.

VALUE PROPOSITION

WHAT WE DO:

Drive pioneering social change that brings our values to life in communities around the world.

HOW WE DO IT:



HIV/AIDS

Reduce the social inequities that drive the epidemic in underserved and high-risk communities.



WORKER RIGHTS & WELL-BEING

Advance the rights of apparel workers and lift up systemic approaches for improving the well-being of workers in the garment industry.



SOCIAL JUSTICE

Advance equity and justice by investing in the voices, leadership and power of historically excluded communities.

THE VALUE WE DELIVER:



FOR COMMUNITIES

Create programs that advance justice and provide opportunities to improve the lives of people living in communities where LS&Co. has a business presence.



FOR EMPLOYEES

Financially support LS&Co.'s volunteer programs and deepen pride of association among employees.



FOR LS&CO.'S REPUTATION

Serve as a key driver in helping LS&Co. to embody the energy and events of our time – ensuring its relevance in the lives of stakeholders beyond the marketplace.

GUIDED BY THE LS&CO. LEGACY

LS&CO. LEGACY	→	LEVI STRAUSS FOUNDATION HALLMARKS
169-year history of industry-leading citizenship	→	Get in early, stay the course
Pioneers Symbol of cultural change	→	Social pioneers Take on the “issues and events of our time”
Legacy of social sustainability leadership	→	Challenge convention, push the limits of the response New frontiers of possibility Agile, audacious and fearless in pursuit of social change
Our values at work: Originality, integrity, empathy, courage	→	Bring our values to life beyond the marketplace

OUR APPROACH: DRIVING SOCIAL CHANGE

SOCIAL CHANGE STRATEGY



GRANTMAKING FOCUS

Change laws and policies

» Support policies and systems change

Drive programmatic innovation and scale

» Identify and build thought and action leadership

Build moral and political consensus for change agenda

» Identify and engage influencers
» Cultivate effective communication

OUR APPROACH: “GOING BEYOND THE GRANT”

GOAL



“GOING BEYOND THE GRANT”

Build thought leadership and influence the field

» Support capacity building
» Lift best practices and voices of grantees

Build grantee organizations

» Link grantees with influencers and other funders

Tell the story of pioneering change

» Develop compelling blogs, case studies, videos
» Leverage corporate communications channels
» Frame and spotlight selected grantees as “social pioneers” reflecting the Levi Strauss values and character

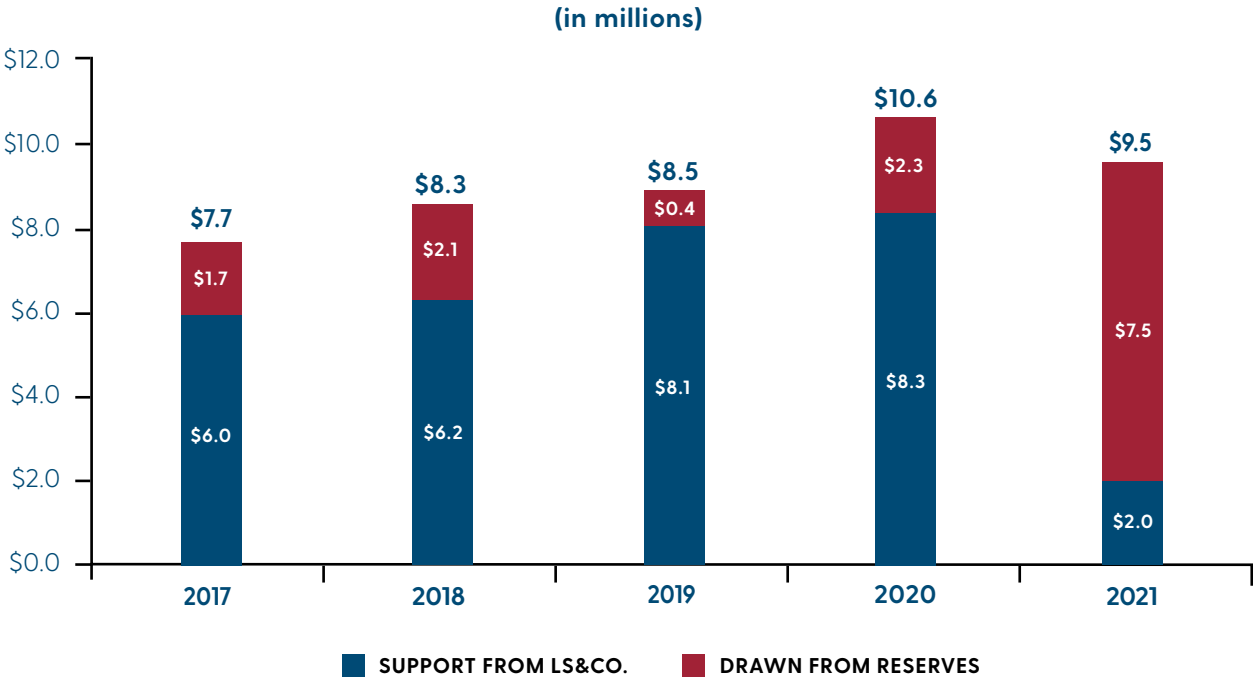


BY THE NUMBERS

2021 IN REVIEW

2021 BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL PROGRAM BUDGET & FUNDING SOURCE



HOW SUPPORT FROM LS&CO. IS CALCULATED

The corporate charitable gift is calculated using EBIT as follows:

Below \$400MM	Fund LSF Operations and direct corporate grantmaking only
\$400MM-\$600MM	1.75% to 2.25%
Over \$600MM	2.25% to 2.75% (capped at \$20MM annually)

CHARITABLE SUPPORT ALLOCATION (2021)

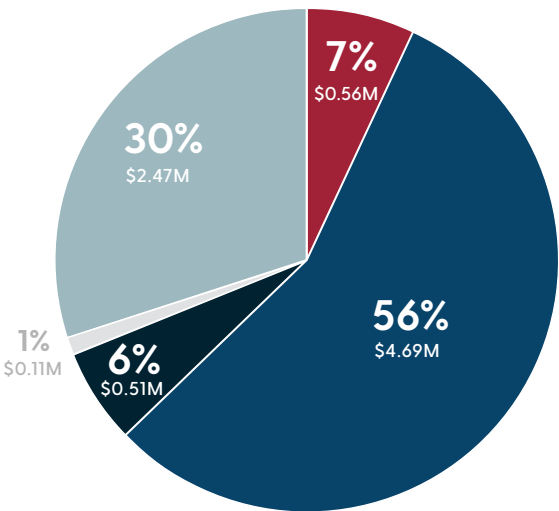
Total Charitable Support	\$5.27MM
Direct Corporate Grantmaking	\$2.00MM
Levi Strauss Foundation Operations	\$1.27MM
Levi Strauss Foundation Grantmaking	\$2.00MM

- » LS&Co. has a consistent track record of allocating 2.0% of profits to charitable support, which is significantly higher than the average corporate contribution of 0.87% of profits.
- » Over the last five years, the contributions from the Company have covered, on average, 70% of the Foundation's program budget.

2021 BY THE NUMBERS

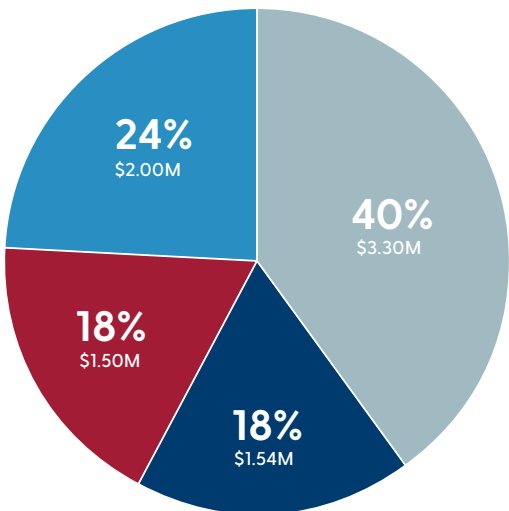
2021 STRATEGIC PROGRAM BUDGET*

GRANTS BY REGION
(BY DOLLARS)



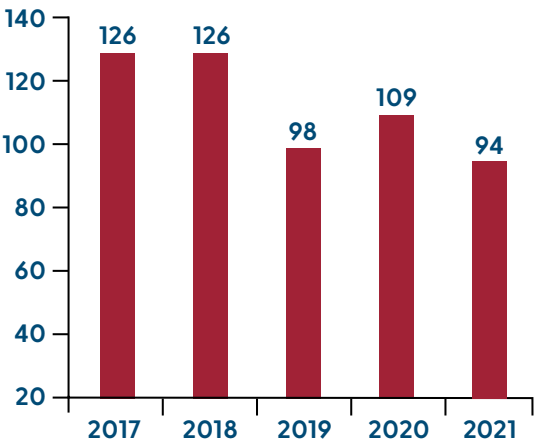
- GLOBAL
- UNITED STATES
- LATIN AMERICA
- EUROPE
- ASIA, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

GRANTS BY PROGRAM
(BY DOLLARS)

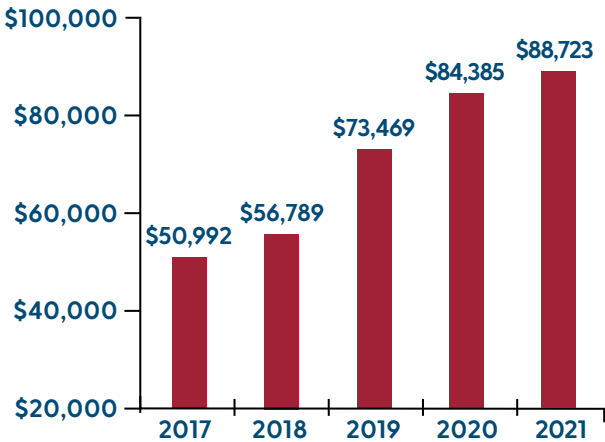


- SOCIAL JUSTICE
- WORKER RIGHTS & WELL-BEING
- HIV/AIDS
- COVID-19

NUMBER OF GRANTS



AVERAGE GRANT SIZE



The number of grants increased by 11% and the average grant size increased by 15% due to the onetime investment in voting rights grants.

*The strategic program budget does not include \$1.15 million employer matching gift and volunteer budget.



IMPACT FRAMEWORK

OVERVIEW

IMPACT FRAMEWORK | OVERVIEW

A FORMULA FOR CHANGE:

IMPACT = INFLUENCE + LEVERAGE + LEARNING

The framework presents the elements of **influence**, **leverage**, and **learning** as contributors to impact. *Isolating these elements shifts attention to them, recognizing them as the factors that can enable, accelerate, or amplify impact. Without considering these elements, progress becomes limited.*



IMPACT FRAMEWORK | OVERVIEW

DEFINITIONS:



IMPACT is the type of outcome most commonly comes to mind. Impact relates to changes in the lives of individuals and among populations in a specific community, geographic area or ecosystem.

Impact outcomes can be changes in attitudes, knowledge, behavior, skills, perceptions, beliefs, practices, relationships or conditions.

Examples of outcomes can be changes in political attitudes, changes in personal aspirations, improved parenting skills, decreased risky behaviors, improved health status, greater educational attainment, greater economic stability, and more.



LEVERAGE refers to changes in the commitment of resources. In some cases, leverage outcomes may relate to changes in the levels of funding to implement a policy or mandate. It may also mean allocation of non-monetary resources, such as staffing dedicated to a particular issue or service or in-kind resources.

Examples are pooled funding to implement a partnership between private businesses and post-secondary institutions, aligned funding across many foundations to support nuclear security issues, contribution of staff time towards a particular cause, and more.



INFLUENCE reflects a wide range of systems-level changes that may happen among or within organizations, institutions, networks, partnerships, policies, practices or community rooms. These changes relate to organizational practice, degree of alignment across groups and organizations, public will, political will, public policies, business practices, and so on.

Examples are adoption of new policies on health care, community goals that are shared and prioritized among many groups and organizations, greater availability of community services in key neighborhoods, more efficient delivery of services, decreased community tolerance of violence, changes in philanthropic practices, changes in levels of corporate engagement in social impact, and more.



LEARNING is about field-building and advancing knowledge, which, the framework insists, is a critical part of any endeavor seeking to advance social impact. While learning can inform the specifics of a particular initiative, learning can also be a way to cross-fertilize across initiatives. Learning helps lift up insights or knowledge, which can then be applied broadly to guide and shape decisions about the choice of practices, the combination of practices, the implementation of practices, and so on.

Examples of learning outcomes can be greater knowledge about how philanthropy can support community leaders or improved processes for sharing strategic lessons gained from a prevention of HIV transmission initiative to another initiative.

The “so what” of this framework is that LSF – like many other foundations with finite resources – is in the business of using leverage, influence and learning as a means to create change and achieve impact. In the pages that follow, we have provided an overview of our primary initiatives and giving areas and conducted an analysis against the Impact Framework. Through this we have asked ourselves where we have the greatest ability to be more strategic with our assets, and identify clear outcomes for our work.



IMPACT FRAMEWORK

IN ACTION



PORTFOLIO PURPOSE

Advance equity and justice by investing in the voices, leadership and power of historically excluded communities.

GOALS

- **Advance Democracy:** Protect and establish a strong and inclusive democracy in the U.S.
- **Support Strong Leaders:** Invest in powerful and resilient leaders of color who build effective movements, campaigns and organizations.
- **Ensure Access to Justice:** Safeguard the rights and well-being of highly vulnerable communities globally.

2021 PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Levi Strauss Foundation has a long history of advancing democracy and ensuring that marginalized communities are protected, uplifted, and enabled to drive the future of our nation. Over the past several years, our country has witnessed increased polarization, including attacks on hard fought gains in civil and human rights and the deliberate silencing of voices in our elections.

During these times, we lean into our remarkable partners that embody the tenacity and vision that is needed to bridge the widening divide and restore justice and equity in our systems. Each day, they bring our shared values— empathy, integrity, courage, originality—to life by daring to do what's right: confronting voter suppression, challenging the repeated attacks on reproductive rights, and amplifying the voices and narratives of communities facing xenophobia.

IMPACT FRAMEWORK



Impact

According to the Brennan Center, more than 440 bills with restrictive voting provisions were introduced in 49 states in 2021. Between January and December, at least 19 states passed 34 restrictive voting laws, demonstrating the unwavering efforts by state governments to silence and prevent voters from engaging in the democratic process. These attacks following the historic turnout of the 2020 election further illustrates the importance of investing in voter engagement and community mobilization efforts. We know that early and consistent investments can lead to outsized impact.

Black Voters Matter, **Fair Count**, and **United We Dream** are a few Foundation grantees that are making voting rights a 365-day effort. Collectively, these organizations have aimed to train over 4,000 canvassers and engage an estimated one million voters across fifteen states in 2021. These organizations are gearing up for the challenge of the decade: ensuring that voters are informed and that their communities are free of voter suppression and the spread of misinformation.



Influence

Over the past two years, Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities have faced increased incidents of hate crimes and discrimination. While these incidents have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, AAPI communities have been grappling with xenophobia and racism for decades.

In July 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed the historic Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Equity Budget, which will allocate \$156.5M in funding to address the surge of hate crimes in AAPI communities across the state. Organized by Foundation grantee **Chinese for Affirmative Action**, and in partnership with a broad coalition of 150 community-based groups and the Asian and Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, the API Equity Budget will stand as one of the most significant investments to date in tackling AAPI racism and crime prevention and providing youth restorative justice programs to stop hate crimes early. In addition, the funding will support community organizations that are providing critical services to survivors of hate crimes and to projects that monitor the needs of AAPI communities.



Leverage

In the U.S, a worrisome trend has emerged to de-prioritize women's health services, with a surge of laws passed at the state-level that aim to prevent women and girls from accessing critical reproductive rights services.

In 2021, the Supreme Court painted a haunting portrait of the future of reproductive rights, by upholding restrictive laws in Mississippi and Texas that disproportionately harm women of color, young people, women living in poverty, people who are disabled, and other marginalized communities that already face barriers to reproductive care. These decisions by the Supreme Court will have far-reaching implications, with women forced to travel hundreds of miles to seek care, higher rates of maternal death, and the likelihood of other states feeling emboldened to ban women's constitutional right to reproductive care.

The Foundation remains steadfast in its support to organizations that remove barriers and fight the egregious attacks on women and girl's healthcare. In 2021, the Foundation provided support to **The Afiya Center**, **Groundswell Fund**, and **ARC-Southeast**. These organizations work tirelessly to expand, protect, and restore women's health services across the U.S by providing direct support to women and girls, and funding to grassroots organizations in states with the most severe and restrictive laws.

Learning

For more than 35 years, the Levi Strauss Foundation has provided support to the **Women's Foundation California (WFC)**, which invests in, trains, and connects community leaders as a key strategy to advance racial, economic and gender justice. At the time WFC was founded, LSF was an outlier, as it was giving 10% of its funding to organizations and programs that supported gender equity – the norm at the time was about 1%. LSF became a model for other foundations to invest in gender justice as a way of accelerating change.

LSF was also the first funder of the Women's Policy Institute, which advances racial, economic and gender justice throughout California by building and investing in the leadership of a dynamic cohort of community leaders. To date, the Institute has trained almost 600 advocates and organizers who have passed over 43 new laws or local policies. Those leaders are all connected to thousands of people in their own networks, which means WFC has the power to activate millions of people across California for progressive policy change.

Leveraging the learnings from this long history informed how WFC responded to COVID-19, which has had a disproportionate impact on women, especially women of color. In California, two-thirds of tipped jobs, part-time jobs and minimum-wage jobs are held by women of color. Those are the women who lost their jobs in the early days of the pandemic. And at the same time, 80% of essential jobs are held by women, especially women of color. In addition, domestic violence rates were spiking in every one of California's 58 counties.

In response to this multi-pronged crisis, WFC created a 'Relief and Resilience Fund, which LSF contributed to, that moved money to more than 150 organizations – including grants to every domestic violence organization in the state. Over the last two years, WFC also increased its support to women-led climate justice organizations and to Black-led organizations.

As WFC moves forward, they are committed to taking the learnings from the past two years of the pandemic – and the prior 35 years – to continue fighting for racial, gender and economic justice in California.

Grantee Spotlight

- In January, President Joe Biden signed an executive order to end the Muslim and African Ban, putting an end to a discriminatory and cruel immigration enforcement tactic. The ban, rooted in Islamophobia and racism, restricted people from entering the U.S from predominantly Muslim and African countries. This achievement is in thanks to immigration rights and human rights organizations across the U.S, including Foundation grantees such as **Advancing Justice-Asian Law Caucus**, and **National Immigration Law Center**.
- As the United States closed out its deployment in Afghanistan and Taliban violence increased, grantee **International Refugee Assistance Project** advocated and successfully helped pass a bill that would remove barriers to safety and resources for over 50,000 allies and their families.
- Throughout 2021, **Urgent Action Fund** supported some of the world's most courageous women and trans human rights defenders through rapid response grantmaking, advocacy, and movement building. Responding to requests within 24 to 72 hours, UAF is able to provide funds directly to global activists and organizations whose safety, security, and well-being is threatened.



PORTFOLIO PURPOSE

Advance the rights of apparel workers and lift up systemic approaches for improving the well-being of workers in the garment industry.

GOALS

- **Fair and Equitable Protections:** Expand the rights of apparel workers, particularly women, in key LS&Co. sourcing countries.
- **Factory Cultures of Trust:** Enable factories to develop and implement policies, systems and programs that build workplace cultures of trust, respect and fairness.
- **System Transformation:** Ideate, test, document and disseminate creative solutions that address systemic root causes of poor health and well-being outcomes for apparel workers.

2021 PROGRAM SUMMARY

In 2021, the Foundation distributed over \$1.5 million to 14 organizations supporting the rights and well-being of apparel workers. It was a challenging year for the apparel sector, which continued to experience widespread disruptions, health risks for workers, and economic instability. Despite these circumstances, our grantees demonstrated resiliency and creativity, adapting with new ways of supporting and advancing the rights of their communities.

The Foundation's worker rights grantees strive to improve the long-term rights of apparel workers by building the capacity of grassroots labor rights groups, engaging in dispute resolution with factories and brands, and collaborating with governments to strengthen labor laws. Collectively, their actions continue to positively impact thousands of apparel workers.

In partnership with Levi Strauss & Co., the Foundation continues to drive the Worker Well-being (WWB) initiative, which aims to improve the lives of the women and men who make our products around the world. While many WWB factory programs were halted in early 2020 due to COVID-19 lockdowns, business disruptions, and safety concerns, grantees found ways to continue their work until in-factory activities could safely resume by leading virtual strategy and learning forums.

IMPACT FRAMEWORK



Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in decreased funding for women's health services globally, as government resources and international aid continues to be redirected towards immediate relief efforts and controlling the virus. With scores of countries going into multiple lockdowns, reproductive health facilities have been forced to closed, interrupting services in some of the most vulnerable communities. **Marie Stopes International** and **International Planned Parenthood Federation** are ensuring that female apparel workers have continued access to comprehensive, high-quality sexual and reproductive health services in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia. Together, Marie Stopes International and International Planned Parenthood Federation reached over 50,000 apparel workers across these five countries in 2021.



Influence

Over the past two decades, the **Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN)** has promoted and defended the rights of apparel workers across the global supply chain through NGO capacity building and cross-sector collaboration. MSN is a skilled facilitator and expert in working with governments on improving labor rights, including for female apparel workers that often face gender discrimination and lack decision-making power. While the pandemic has diverted attention to relief efforts, MSN has continued to promote multi-stakeholder dialogues and actions to advance policy change around women's workplace rights across Central America. In 2021 MSN continued to provide support to regional coalitions and women's organizations that focus on the apparel industry to build their capacity to serve as leaders on labor rights issues. Additionally, MSN assists these organizations in developing global campaigns that promote freedom of association and raise awareness on wage violations and gender-based violence.



Leverage

Across the globe, 12 million apparel workers do not have access to corrective eyewear or the opportunity to see optometrists, impeding on their ability to lead a fulfilling life and affecting their ability to work.

VisionSpring operates on the principle that "If you can't see, you can't work." Vision loss can often force apparel workers out of the workforce, given that the nature of work requires attention and precision to materials at close eye range. To mitigate the negative consequences of vision impairment, VisionSpring created an alliance made up of garment and home goods brands, such as Levi Strauss & Co., Target, and VF Corporation. Together, this alliance increases eyeglass coverage rates in factories through vision screenings and eyeglasses fittings, ensuring that workers can maintain their productivity, income, and care for their families. Initially COVID-19 led to disruptions in services, but in 2021 VisionSpring safely resumed eye screenings in the countries where it operates. The alliance has jointly screened and fit thousands of workers for glasses.



Learning

In 2021, the Foundation continued its partnership with the [Sustainability and Health Initiative for NetPositive Enterprise \(SHINE\)](#) at Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, publishing a [summary report](#) of insights gleaned from over 13,000 workers in the LS&Co. supply chain. Findings demonstrate the connection between worker health and factory business outcomes, as well as identifying opportunities to make deeper investments in the well-being of apparel workers. Drawing on the findings this research, the Foundation partnered with the Company to update its WWB Guidebook, which offers new strategies to suppliers that build on the program's success to date. The Guidebook will be shared publicly in 2022.

Grantee Spotlight

- **BSR's HerFinance** released a [case study](#) on LS&Co. and Mastercard's partnership effort to digitize workers' wages at a supplier factory in Egypt. Evidence shows that digitization of wage payments can lead to greater efficiency for employers and increase financial inclusion and well-being for workers. By September 2021, over 8,700 employees at the Egyptian factory were being paid into digital accounts, increasing payroll efficiency and reducing production time losses on payday.
- **Swasti Health Catalysts'** COVID-19 helpline, which provides updated information on vaccines and counselling support, has allowed women, particularly women apparel workers, to receive up-to-date coronavirus information and advice. Due to poor access to primary health care, the ideal way to reach apparel workers has been through digital technology. The unique program brings together various stakeholders, such as brands, factories, government agencies, and NGOs, to ensure that all workers have access to affordable and accurate health care.



PHOTO FROM CARE CAMBODIA



PORTFOLIO PURPOSE

Reduce the social inequities that drive the HIV/AIDS epidemic in underserved and high-risk communities in the United States and in middle-income countries where LS&Co. has a business presence.

GOALS

- **Fair Legal Frameworks:** No unjust or discriminatory laws related to HIV/AIDS exist.
- **Just and Equitable Treatment:** Communities most impacted by HIV/AIDS are treated justly and with dignity, respected by all government institutions, and are strong and effective advocates for social change.
- **Adequate Investment:** Governments and private institutions make necessary investments to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS.

2021 PROGRAM SUMMARY

We have always believed that HIV/AIDS was more than just a medical condition, more than just a disease. It has always been about standing with and supporting the people and communities impacted by it. Our response to HIV/AIDS dates back to a time when it was considered a “gay-related immunodeficiency”—a term fraught with stigma, discrimination and moral judgment. In 1982, our leaders stood in solidarity with concerned employees to pass out information leaflets at the company’s San Francisco headquarters to all employees. It was the beginning of an enduring commitment to confront the social inequities that continue to fuel the HIV/AIDS epidemic today: homophobia, racism, transphobia, gender inequality, stigma and discrimination.

No human being is illegal. Our grantmaking strategy for HIV/AIDS is to center and uplift those communities most impacted by the epidemic into leadership and decision-making roles, to ensure accountability to these communities, and to enable true health equity and the equitable allocation of resources.

Since 1983, we’ve invested over \$78 million from the Levi Strauss Foundation and the company into frontline HIV/AIDS nonprofits in the United States and in more than 40 countries around the world.

IMPACT FRAMEWORK



Impact

Sampada Grameen Mahila Sanstha (SANGRAM) is a voluntary organization in India that responds to HIV/AIDS through a comprehensive strategy of prevention, access to treatment, care and support. It started its efforts with women in prostitution and sex work. SANGRAM continues to conduct training sessions for the National Network of Sex Workers, a membership of over 150,000 across eight states in India.

While the government identified several categories of marginalized groups—transgender people, disabled people, informal sector workers, migrants—for immediate disaster relief aid, sex workers were left out of all COVID-19 relief package programs. This has particularly impacted sex workers living with HIV and older sex workers living with co-morbidities. Sex workers united and campaigned against the discrimination they faced—such as proof of identity through documents—as compared to other contact workers like masseurs.

To ensure that HIV/AIDS support services reached sex workers during the pandemic, SANGRAM and its partners petitioned the judiciary to ensure an uninterrupted supply of second line ARV medications during the lockdowns.

At the end of 2020, the Supreme Court of India passed directives for sex workers to receive dry rations and other benefits without insisting on proof of identity through documents. Shortly after, the National Human Rights Commission issued an advisory on the rights of women during the pandemic, stating that sex workers must be “recognized as workers and be registered so that they are able to get worker benefits.” The advisory also recommends the issuance of temporary identity documents, especially for migrant sex workers, to enable them to access welfare benefits, healthcare, and protection from domestic violence. While these are welcome responses brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and its lockdown measures, there is still a long journey to transform social perception to accept sex workers as equal citizens and an integral part of society.

The **Sero Project**’s policy change and advocacy work includes HIV criminalization reform. It produces a national training academy called HIV Is Not a Crime in partnership with Positive Women’s Network – USA, Positively Trans, THRIVE SS and the U.S. People Living with HIV Caucus, working in coalition with national, state and local social justice organizations seeking to reform or abolish antiquated laws related to HIV/AIDS. This annual training academy aims to educate and train people living with HIV, activists, stakeholders and policy leaders to mobilize state-level advocacy to end HIV criminalization.

In July 2021, Illinois became just the second state in U.S. history to fully repeal its outdated laws criminalizing HIV transmission. Earlier in May, Nevada legislature passed a bill to modernize its HIV laws and ensure they will be in sync with advances in modern medicine that make transmission of the virus impossible.

In April, Virginia lawmakers stopped short of decriminalizing HIV. Instead, the law was modernized and its language was broadened to include all sexually treated infections. However, the related charge remains a felony.

Since 2014, at least five states have modernized their laws to better align with current scientific evidence: California, Colorado, Iowa, Michigan and North Carolina. Only one other state—Texas, in 1994—repealed its law, though people living with HIV there are still prosecuted for failing to disclose their status.

Influence

In February 2021, leading up to National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, **AIDS United** and its Public Policy Council, which is composed of 55 of the nation's leading organizations dedicated to ending HIV, announced the launch of the Racial Justice Index. The initiative aims to create awareness and sustained change around the misalignment between who holds power and resources in HIV organizations and the epidemic's disproportionate impact on Black Americans.

The Racial Justice Index emerged from more than two years of conversations led by leaders of color among the Public Policy Council and was made more urgent by the national outcry for racial justice. The Index's mission is to assess and improve the HIV sector's commitment to racial equity by creating assessment tools and resources to combat anti-Black racism and other forms of racism that will first be analyzed in AIDS United itself and Public Policy Council organizations. This includes hiring practices, leadership, talent retention and decision-making in the HIV movement. The work of the Racial Justice Index will first assess how leadership in the HIV movement reflects the communities most impacted and will later aim to provide training and capacity building to root out white supremacy in HIV organizations' work.

Leverage

The **Syringe Access Fund** is a collaborative grantmaking initiative supported by AIDS United, Elton John AIDS Foundation, H. van Ameringen Foundation and the Levi Strauss Foundation. To date, the Syringe Access Fund has awarded more than \$17 million to support syringe services programs, advocate for the removal of the federal funding ban on syringes and increase financial support for comprehensive harm reduction services across the United States. Demand for syringe services programs is growing, and it is critical that funding increases to match this need. This is a pivotal moment in the national response to HIV/AIDS and the opioid overdose syndemics.

On March 6, 2021, President Biden signed into law the American Rescue Act, which provides nearly \$4 billion for substance use disorder and mental health treatment, including the unprecedented allocation of \$30 million "to support community-based overdose prevention programs, syringe services programs, and other harm reduction services." This funding is exempt from the long-standing federal restriction on the use of federal dollars to purchase syringes. However, several state and local governments did not embrace the strategy, choosing to reject evidence-based approaches to the overdose crisis and potentially forfeiting federal financial support.

In July, a Congressional budget committee released a draft spending bill that seemed to erase what remains of a longstanding ban on federal funding for syringe service programs. It would dramatically increase government funding for harm reduction. It was not clear from the draft text exactly how the money could be used, and if any restrictions would apply. Record overdose figures are the starkest possible reminder that an effective way out of this crisis is to invest in robust public health measures.



Learning

Funders Concerned About AIDS (FCAA)'s mission is to mobilize the leadership, ideas, and resources of philanthropic community to eradicate the global HIV/AIDS epidemic and to address its social and economic dimensions. The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the consequences of siloed philanthropy and the imperative to accelerate intersectional, multi-level work, with particular attention to integrating the HIV and COVID-19 responses with racial justice efforts in the U.S.

In April 2021, FCAA released a report titled “Converging Epidemics: COVID-19, HIV and Inequity.” The report highlighted how marginalized communities have been impacted by COVID-19 in the U.S. and globally and what their key evolving needs have been as the pandemic has progressed; provided reflections on lessons learned from private funders’ emergency COVID-19 response; and presented a set of recommendations for funders, global health institutions, and governments for their efforts going forward.

In November 2021, FCAA released the “Racial Justice in HIV Philanthropy Guiding Principles” to help funding organizations change their approach to philanthropy to focus on racial equity and racial justice. The genesis for these principles started in 2018, in partnership with HIV Racial Justice Now. This in turn led FCAA to form its Racial Justice Working Group to advocate for increased resources and to urge philanthropy to improve transparency in racial justice efforts so that grantmaking can be adequately monitored and improved.

The organization also took a deeper look at the data gathered through its resource tracking efforts to determine how much philanthropic HIV funding was actually going to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities in the U.S. The data showed that, despite the structural racism and social determinants of health that fuel the epidemic among people of color, there was a clear and wide gap in available resources. While there may have been an increased emphasis from grantmakers in recent years, funding opportunities have not necessarily addressed racial equity by explicitly naming BIPOC communities in their intent and strategy.





SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to be a devastating global crisis of unprecedented scale that impacted the health and well-being of everyone. At the end of 2021, global deaths totaled 3.6 million. The United States alone surpassed 1 million deaths. The cost in human lives is tragic.

The pandemic's social and economic aftershocks have harmed the poor and vulnerable the most. The economic damage continues to leave millions of people out of work and struggling to pay bills and put food on the table. Although the retail sector has recovered slowly, the ripple effect from the initial lockdowns are still hitting garment sector supply chains around the world. For example, one report estimates that more than 350,000 garment factory workers in Bangladesh lost their jobs.

COVID-19 put a glaring spotlight on the social inequities and injustices that many communities endure. Black Americans were dying at 1.7 times the rate of white Americans. The initial fear and scapegoating about the virus led to a huge increase in anti-Asian hate and acts of violence in the United States and other parts of the Western world. Cis- and transgender women lost more jobs, shouldered a greater share of unpaid work, and suffered a surge in domestic violence. Low-wage essential workers were more likely to face less safe working conditions and increased food insecurity.

COVID-19 put a glaring spotlight on the social inequities and injustices that many communities endure.

When the pandemic hit, it was clear the Foundation needed to stand with the communities we had chosen to serve—including immigrants, refugees, communities of color, people impacted by HIV/AIDS, LGBTQ+ people, and apparel workers—because the most vulnerable are usually the most impacted and under-resourced. In 2020, the Foundation committed \$2 million toward relief efforts for communities and supply chain workers. In this post-COVID-19 world, it was clear the Foundation needed to invest in resiliency, recovery and rehabilitation of these same communities.

In 2021, LSF invested \$2 million in the following 24 organizations:

Social Justice

- Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium
- Borealis Philanthropy – Fund for Trans Generations
- Counter Narrative Project
- Fair Count
- Horizons
- Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders
- National Day Laborers Organizing Network
- Partnership with Native Americans
- Semillas
- Southern Black Policy and Advocacy Network
- Stop AAPI Hate Initiative
- Stop the Spread
- Voice of the Experienced
- WeCount!

HIV/AIDS

- AIDS United – Relief, Recovery and Resilience Fund
- Transgender Strategy Center – HIV and COVID-19 Relief Fund

Apparel Workers

- ActionAid
- CARE Cambodia
- CARE India
- Centre for Promotion of Quality of Life
- Elas
- Maria Elena Cuadra Movement of Women Workers and Unemployed Women
- Rizq Trust
- Standup Movement Lanka

